



## **News for Immediate Release**

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### **Water Commission Honors Former Department of Water Resources Director Ronald B. Robie**

**SACRAMENTO** -- Ronald B. Robie, an influential leader in California's water history, has been given a special State Water Project honor.

The California Water Commission has unanimously voted to re-name the State Water Project's (SWP) Thermalito Pumping-Generating Plant at Oroville to commemorate Justice Robie's distinguished water service to California.

The Commission, which consists of nine members appointed by the Governor, has oversight and approval responsibilities for a wide range of water management activities. The proposal to rename the Thermalito Pumping-Generating Plant was originally proposed by Justice Arthur Scotland, a colleague of Justice Robie on the Third District Court of Appeal, and was supported by many state and federal water contractors, the Water Education Foundation, and other members of the public.

Robie served as director of the Department of Water Resources (DWR) from 1975 to 1982, during Edmund G. Brown Jr.'s first two terms as Governor. During his directorship, Robie helped achieve federal "wild river" status for several California rivers, confronted water supply and Delta water quality issues, led a legislative effort to validate a peripheral canal and showed conservation leadership during California's major drought of 1976-1977.

"My years at DWR were some of the greatest of my career," said Robie, DWR's fifth Director. "The employees of the department were always first rate -- the finest in state government."

In a distinguished public career, Robie served in all three branches of government. A 1958 journalism graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, Robie entered state service in the Legislature. He served as a consultant to the Assembly Water Policy Committee, analyzing complex legislation and dealing with thorny water policy issues.

"Justice Robie has had a profound and beneficial impact on the development and protection of our state's water resources and continues to be a leading voice for balancing environmental and water supply needs," said Anthony Saracino, chair of the California Water Commission. "The Commission is proud to acknowledge his lasting contributions in this way."

Robie worked closely with veteran Assemblyman Carley Porter in helping write the landmark Burns-Porter Act. Its passage in 1959 authorized issuance of \$1.75 billion in general obligation bonds to finance construction of California's State Water Project (SWP). In November 1960, California voters approved the bond issue, making possible construction of the largest State-run water and power system in the United States.

While a legislative consultant, Robie earned a law degree at McGeorge School of Law. He became a top legislative expert on California water law and water policy.

This expertise served him well when Governor Ronald Reagan appointed him to membership on the State Water Resources Control Board, a regulatory body with jurisdiction in areas of water rights and water quality. Robie was a member of the board from 1969 to 1975, when Governor Brown selected him to lead DWR.

After Robie left DWR, Governor Brown in 1983 appointed him to the Sacramento Municipal Court bench. In 1986 Robie was elected to the Sacramento County Superior Court. In 2002, Governor Gray Davis appointed him to the State Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, where he currently serves.

To reach his judicial office in the Library and Courts Building in Sacramento these days, Justice Robie strolls right past the Natural Resources Building where he had offices as DWR Director.

Proud of his DWR service, Robie as Director presided over a gala party celebrating the Department's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He was a speaker at DWR's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2006, sharing memories of DWR service with scores of his former peers and co-workers.

Four earlier DWR directors have been honored by having key facilities in the SWP named for them. They are: Harvey O. Banks, DWR's first director, 1956-1961, Delta Pumping Plant renamed in his honor; William E. Warne, DWR's second director, 1961-1967, power plant near Pyramid Lake, Los Angeles County, renamed for him; William Gianelli, third director, 1967-1973, pumping generating plant near San Luis Reservoir renamed in his honor, and John Teerink, fourth director, 1973-1975, pumping plant on the California Aqueduct, renamed for him.

A high definition video clip of Robie, the Thermalito Pumping-Generating Plant at Oroville, and the Water Commission meeting is available [here](#) for media purposes.

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*The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.*

Contact the [DWR Public Affairs Office](#) for more information about DWR's water activities.